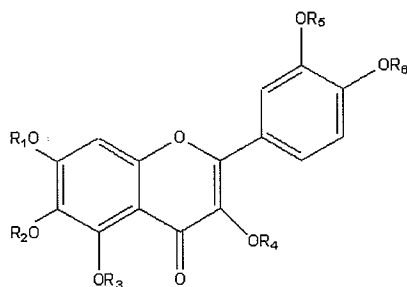


## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently amended) A method for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites comprising:

~~a step of applying a skin preparation for external use for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites, comprising, as an active ingredient, a dendrite elongation inhibitor for melanocytes consisting of a compound represented by the following general formula (1) and/or a salt thereof to the skin of an individual in need thereof, whereby elongation of melanocytic dendrites is inhibited:~~

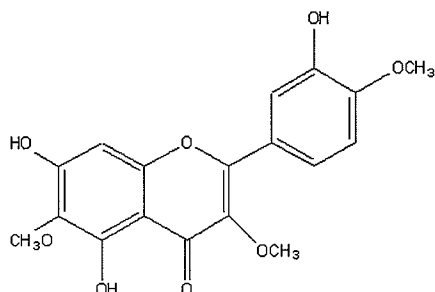


formula (1)

~~and/or a salt thereof,~~

wherein R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub>, R<sub>3</sub>, R<sub>4</sub>, R<sub>5</sub>, and R<sub>6</sub> each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a C<sub>1-4</sub> alkyl group.

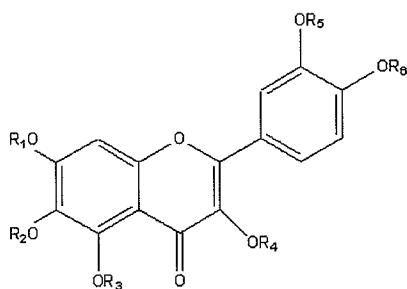
8. (Previously presented) The method for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites according to claim 7, wherein the compound represented by the general formula (1) is Centaureidin indicated by the following formula.



9. (Currently amended) The method for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites according to claim 7 or 8, wherein the skin ~~preparation for external use alleviates~~has dyschromatosis on which tyrosinase inhibitors have insufficient effect.

10-11. (Canceled)

12. (New) A method for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites comprising applying a skin preparation for external use comprising 0.005 to 5% by weight of a compound represented by the following general formula (1) and/or a salt thereof to an individual in need thereof, whereby elongation of melanocytic dendrites is inhibited:



formula (1)

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wherein  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$ ,  $R_4$ ,  $R_5$ , and  $R_6$  each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a  $C_{1-4}$  alkyl group.

13. (New) The method for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites according to claim 12, wherein the skin preparation for external use is a cosmetic.